



1642
Efu

Application No.

09/857,308

Applicant(s)

ITOH ET AL.9

Examiner

Christopher H Yaen

Art Unit

1642

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 February 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 7-12, 15-17, 19, 20, 28 and 29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7-12, 15, 17, 19, 20, 28 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

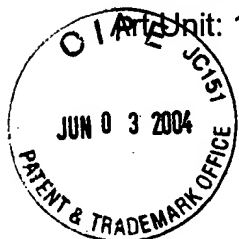
Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date: 05062004
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.



Art Unit: 1642

SUPPLEMENTAL DETAILED ACTION

RE: Itoh et al

Priority Date: 30 November 1999

1. The amendment filed 2/4/2004 is acknowledged and entered into the record. Accordingly, claims 1-6, 13-14, 18, and 21-27 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.
2. Claims 7-12, 15-17, 19-20, and 28-29 are pending.
3. Claim 16 is withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 10/02/2002.

It is noted that the applicant traverses the withdrawal of claim 16 and states that the claim is drawn to derivatives of one of SEQ ID No: 3-5, of which were examined on the merits. Applicant's traversal is noted, however, applicant elected in a paper filed 5/15/2003 to pursue the sequence of SEQ ID No: 5 as the initial species for examination and therefore only claims that read on SEQ ID No: 5 were examined on the merits. All other sequences which did not read on the elected species were withdrawn from further consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species. Furthermore, because art was applied to the elected species (SEQ ID No: 5), an examination of other species found within the Markush group were not searched (i.e. SEQ ID No: 3-4), nor were any other sequence. The restriction is thereby held proper and was made FINAL in the last office action.

Art Unit: 1642

4. Claims 7-12, 15, 17, 19-20, and 28-29 are examined on the merits.
5. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Information Disclosure Statement

6. The Information Disclosure Statement filed 6/1/2001 is acknowledged and considered. A signed copy of the IDS is attached hereto.

Claim Rejections Maintained - 35 USC § 112, 1st paragraph

7. The rejection of claims 9-12, 15, 17, 19-20, and 28-29 under 35 USC 112, 1st paragraph as lacking proper written description is maintained for the reasons of record. Applicant argues that the written description for tumor antigen peptides is defined as those "peptides of 8-14 amino acids in length" and "derivatives" are defined by the substitutions at amino acid position 2 and/or the C-terminus by any amino acid so long as the "derivative" is "functional equivalent". This argument is not deemed persuasive to overcome the rejection of record because the specification has not defined the intended amino acid sequences. Furthermore, the substitution of any amino acid into the derivative has not been defined nor has a specific functional correlation been provided so that one of skill in the art would know that the applicant was in possession of a representative number of derivatives that are functionally equivalent.
8. Applicant further argues that selection of specific amino acid sequences represented by sequence identification numbers have been exemplified in the specification,

Art Unit: 1642

however, because the currently amended claims recite "fragments of SEQ ID No: 1" and because the SEQ ID Nos: 3-5 are not all encompassing of all the possible fragments claimed and because there are no functional characteristics associated with the desired fragments, one of skill in the art cannot specifically recognize that the species of fragments claimed is representative of the broad genus of any and all fragments of SEQ ID No: 1. The fragments represented by SEQ ID No: 3-5 do not have a core sequences which can be specifically correlated or predictable so as to be representative of the broad class of fragments claimed. Therefore, the rejection under 35 USC 112, 1st paragraph as lacking written description is maintained for the reasons of record.

Claim Rejections Maintained - 35 USC § 102

9. The rejection of claims 9, 11-12, 15 and now newly rejected claim 10 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Nagase *et al* is maintained for the reasons of record. Applicant argues that the prior art fails to anticipate the claims as currently amended because Nagase *et al* fail to teach a peptide that is 8-14 amino acids in length and fails to teach function or activity of the claimed peptide. Applicant's arguments have been carefully considered but are not deemed persuasive to overcome the rejection of record. Because the claims are interpreted as being open, Nagase *et al* still anticipates the peptide of the claimed invention. The claims are drawn to a peptide of 8-14 amino acids in length that is comprised within SEQ ID No: 1. Because the Nagase *et al* teach a protein that is 100% identical to that of SEQ ID No: 1, any peptide fragment of SEQ ID No: 1 would be anticipated. Further applicant argues that the function and

Art Unit: 1642

activity of the peptide is not disclosed by Nagase *et al.* Because the invention is drawn to the product *per se*, the function and activity of the peptide would be an inherent property and would not be a patentable distinction from the peptide taught by Nagase *et al.* Lastly, applicant argues that amended claim 12 is not anticipated because Nagase *et al.* do not teach the characterization of a peptide that is identical to SEQ ID No: 5, nor does Nagase *et al.* recognize the function of the small peptide of 8 amino acids.

Although the small 8 amino acid sequence is not recognized by Nagase *et al.* as an independent fragment, the claims as currently amended do not preclude sequences found endogenously in SEQ ID No: 1, because the invention is claimed broadly and encompasses the entire sequence taught by Nagase *et al.*

Claim Rejections Maintained - 35 USC § 112, 1st paragraph

10. The rejection of claims 7-8, 17, and 20 under 35 USC 112, 1st paragraph as lacking an enabling disclosure is maintained for the reasons of record. Applicant argues that at the time the invention was made others were able to demonstrate successful usage of tumor antigen peptides *in vivo*. Applicant's arguments have been carefully considered but are not deemed persuasive to overcome the rejection of record. The references provided do not provide any indication nor do they provide any correlation between the tumor antigen peptides taught in those references to the peptides claimed in the instant specification. One of skill in the art cannot reasonably extrapolate the findings in those references to the instant invention because those references do not shed any light on the ability of the instant peptide to work *in vivo* as a pharmaceutical

Art Unit: 1642

composition. The extrapolation of knowledge from the prior art and from the instant specification would not provide the skill artisan with enough guidance to use the composition in the form of a pharmaceutical composition because the effectiveness of the composition cannot be readily anticipated as functional in the absence of a working example in vivo. One of skill in the art would not be able to predict with any certainty that the peptides of the instant invention would act in a manner similar to those taught in the prior art references cited. Therefore the rejection under 35 USC 112, 1st paragraph as lacking an enabling disclosure is maintained for the reasons of record.

New Arguments

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112, 2nd paragraph

11. Claims 7-8, 17, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

With regard to claims that read on "pharmaceutical" compositions, it is unclear as to what other component is intended in the "composition". A composition is defined a substance that comprises more than one component (see Merriam-Webster Online wherein a "composition" is defined as a "product of mixing or combining various elements or ingredients").

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112, 1st paragraph

Art Unit: 1642

12. Claims 7-8, and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Claim 7-8 and 28 recite specific cell lines.

It is apparent that the recited cell lines are required to practice the claimed invention, because they are specifically required in the claims. As required elements they must be known and readily available to the public or obtainable by a repeatable method set forth in the specification, or otherwise readily available to the public. If it is not so obtainable or available, the enablement requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, may be satisfied by a deposit of the cell lines listed in claim 7. See 37 CFR 1.802.

The specification does not provide a repeatable method for obtaining the cell lines of claims 7-8 and 28, and they do not appear to be readily available material. Deposit of the cell lines would satisfy the enablement requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112. While the specification states on page 11 that the cell lines have been deposited at The National Institute of Bioscience and Human Technology, the specification does not indicate the terms of the deposit.

If a deposit is made under the terms of the Budapest Treaty, then an affidavit or declaration by applicants or someone associated with the patent owner who is in a position to make such assurances, or a statement by an attorney of record over his or her signature, stating that the deposit has been made under the terms of the Budapest Treaty and that all restrictions imposed by the depositor on the availability to the public

Art Unit: 1642

of the deposited material will be irrevocably removed upon the granting of a patent, would satisfy the deposit requirements. See 37 CFR 1.808.

If a deposit is not made under the terms of the Budapest Treaty, then an affidavit or declaration by applicants or someone associated with the patent owner who is in a position to make such assurances, or a statement by an attorney of record over his or her signature, stating that the deposit has been made at an acceptable depository and that the following criteria have been met:

- (a) during the pendency of this application, access to the invention will be afforded to one determined by the Commissioner to be entitled thereto;
 - (b) all restrictions imposed by the depositor on the availability to the public of the deposited material will be irrevocably removed upon granting of the patent;
 - (c) the deposit will be maintained for a term of at least thirty (30) years and at least five (5) years after the most recent request for the furnishing of a sample of the deposited material;
 - (d) a viability statement in accordance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.807;
- and
- (e) the deposit will be replaced should it become necessary due to inviability, contamination or loss of capability to function in the manner described in the specification.

In addition the identifying information set forth in 37 CFR 1.809(d) should be added to the specification. See 37 CFR 1.803 - 37 CFR 1.809 for additional explanation of these requirements.

All other rejections are withdrawn in view of the applicant's amendments and arguments thereto as set forth in a paper filed 2/4/2004.

Conclusion


14. No claim is allowed.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher H Yaen whose telephone number is 571-272-0838. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Yvonne Eyler can be reached on 571-272-0871. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Christopher Yaen
Art Unit 1642


GARY NICKOL
PRIMARY EXAMINER

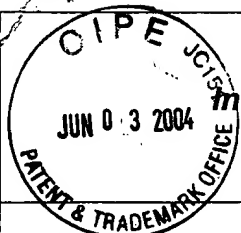
Application/Control Number: 09/857,308

Page 10

Art Unit: 1642

April 28, 2004





Interview Summary

Application No.

09/857,308

Applicant(s)

ITOH ET AL.9

Examiner

Christopher H Yaen

Art Unit

1642

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) Christopher H Yaen.

(3) _____.

(2) _____.

(4) _____.

Date of Interview: _____.

Type: a) ☐ Telephonic b) ☐ Video Conference

c) ☐ Personal [copy given to: 1) ☐ applicant 2) ☐ applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: d) ☐ Yes e) ☐ No.

If Yes, brief description: _____.

Claim(s) discussed: _____.

Identification of prior art discussed: _____.


Agreement with respect to the claims f) ☐ was reached. g) ☐ was not reached. h) ☐ N/A.

Substance of Interview including description of the general nature of what was agreed to if an agreement was reached, or any other comments: Applicant's representative called to inquire about the "finality" of the case. Informed applicant that the case was inadvertently marked as "final" in the conclusion section and that a new supplemental office action will be sent.

(A fuller description, if necessary, and a copy of the amendments which the examiner agreed would render the claims allowable, if available, must be attached. Also, where no copy of the amendments that would render the claims allowable is available, a summary thereof must be attached.)

THE FORMAL WRITTEN REPLY TO THE LAST OFFICE ACTION MUST INCLUDE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW. (See MPEP Section 713.04). If a reply to the last Office action has already been filed, APPLICANT IS GIVEN ONE MONTH FROM THIS INTERVIEW DATE, OR THE MAILING DATE OF THIS INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM, WHICHEVER IS LATER, TO FILE A STATEMENT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW. See Summary of Record of Interview requirements on reverse side or on attached sheet.

Examiner Note: You must sign this form unless it is an Attachment to a signed Office action.


Examiner's signature, if required

Summary of Record of Interview Requirements

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP), Section 713.04, Substance of Interview Must be Made of Record

A complete written statement as to the substance of any face-to-face, video conference, or telephone interview with regard to an application must be made of record in the application whether or not an agreement with the examiner was reached at the interview.

Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1.133 Interviews

Paragraph (b)

In every instance where reconsideration is requested in view of an interview with an examiner, a complete written statement of the reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action must be filed by the applicant. An interview does not remove the necessity for reply to Office action as specified in §§ 1.111, 1.135. (35 U.S.C. 132)

37 CFR §1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent or Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.

The action of the Patent and Trademark Office cannot be based exclusively on the written record in the Office if that record is itself incomplete through the failure to record the substance of interviews.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or the attorney or agent to make the substance of an interview of record in the application file, unless the examiner indicates he or she will do so. It is the examiner's responsibility to see that such a record is made and to correct material inaccuracies which bear directly on the question of patentability.

Examiners must complete an Interview Summary Form for each interview held where a matter of substance has been discussed during the interview by checking the appropriate boxes and filling in the blanks. Discussions regarding only procedural matters, directed solely to restriction requirements for which interview recordation is otherwise provided for in Section 812.01 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, or pointing out typographical errors or unreadable script in Office actions or the like, are excluded from the interview recordation procedures below. Where the substance of an interview is completely recorded in an Examiners Amendment, no separate Interview Summary Record is required.

The Interview Summary Form shall be given an appropriate Paper No., placed in the right hand portion of the file, and listed on the "Contents" section of the file wrapper. In a personal interview, a duplicate of the Form is given to the applicant (or attorney or agent) at the conclusion of the interview. In the case of a telephone or video-conference interview, the copy is mailed to the applicant's correspondence address either with or prior to the next official communication. If additional correspondence from the examiner is not likely before an allowance or if other circumstances dictate, the Form should be mailed promptly after the interview rather than with the next official communication.

The Form provides for recordation of the following information:

- Application Number (Series Code and Serial Number)
- Name of applicant
- Name of examiner
- Date of interview
- Type of interview (telephonic, video-conference, or personal)
- Name of participant(s) (applicant, attorney or agent, examiner, other PTO personnel, etc.)
- An indication whether or not an exhibit was shown or a demonstration conducted
- An identification of the specific prior art discussed
- An indication whether an agreement was reached and if so, a description of the general nature of the agreement (may be by attachment of a copy of amendments or claims agreed as being allowable). Note: Agreement as to allowability is tentative and does not restrict further action by the examiner to the contrary.
- The signature of the examiner who conducted the interview (if Form is not an attachment to a signed Office action)

It is desirable that the examiner orally remind the applicant of his or her obligation to record the substance of the interview of each case. It should be noted, however, that the Interview Summary Form will not normally be considered a complete and proper recordation of the interview unless it includes, or is supplemented by the applicant or the examiner to include, all of the applicable items required below concerning the substance of the interview.

A complete and proper recordation of the substance of any interview should include at least the following applicable items:

- 1) A brief description of the nature of any exhibit shown or any demonstration conducted,
- 2) an identification of the claims discussed,
- 3) an identification of the specific prior art discussed,
- 4) an identification of the principal proposed amendments of a substantive nature discussed, unless these are already described on the Interview Summary Form completed by the Examiner,
- 5) a brief identification of the general thrust of the principal arguments presented to the examiner,
(The identification of arguments need not be lengthy or elaborate. A verbatim or highly detailed description of the arguments is not required. The identification of the arguments is sufficient if the general nature or thrust of the principal arguments made to the examiner can be understood in the context of the application file. Of course, the applicant may desire to emphasize and fully describe those arguments which he or she feels were or might be persuasive to the examiner.)
- 6) a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed, and
- 7) if appropriate, the general results or outcome of the interview unless already described in the Interview Summary Form completed by the examiner.

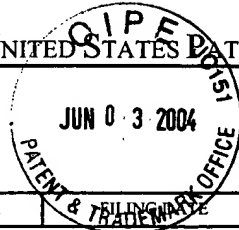
Examiners are expected to carefully review the applicant's record of the substance of an interview. If the record is not complete and accurate, the examiner will give the applicant an extendable one month time period to correct the record.

Examiner to Check for Accuracy

If the claims are allowable for other reasons of record, the examiner should send a letter setting forth the examiner's version of the statement attributed to him or her. If the record is complete and accurate, the examiner should place the indication, "Interview Record OK" on the paper recording the substance of the interview along with the date and the examiner's initials.



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/856,840	09/06/2001	David Reverter	932-1199	4743

21831 7590 05/26/2004

STEINBERG & RASKIN, P.C.
1140 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, 15th FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10036-5803

EXAMINER

WAX, ROBERT A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1653

DATE MAILED: 05/26/2004

09/ 857308

8/26/04

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



MARTIN G. RASKIN
AMY F. DIVINO
GRANT E. POLLACK
JOSHUA L. RASKIN

Sharon B. Meyer
smeyer@steinbergaskin.com
Ext. 222

STEINBERG & RASKIN, P.C.

PATENTS, TRADEMARKS AND COPYRIGHTS

1140 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, 15TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10036-5803

(212) 768-3800
FAX: (212) 382-2124
FAX: (212) 768-3765

E-MAIL: sr@steinbergaskin.com
URL: www.steinbergaskin.com

DAVID B. SUNSHINE
DONA C. EDWARDS
LINDSEY S. LEIBOWITZ
CARRIE A. COLBY

OF COUNSEL:
ANDRES N. MADRID

HAROLD D. STEINBERG

May 28, 2004

Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Attn: Examiner Christopher H. Yaen

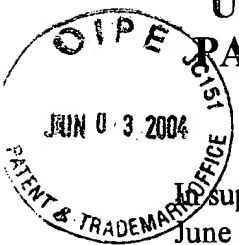
Re: Office Action for Application No. 09/857,308
Applicant: Itoh et al.

Dear Examiner Yaen:

As per our telephonic conversation on May 28, 2004, we mistakenly received an office action in connection with the above-identified patent application. The original office action is enclosed herewith.

Very truly yours,


Sharon Meyer



USPTO TO PROVIDE ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO CITED U.S. PATENT REFERENCES WITH OFFICE ACTIONS AND CEASE SUPPLYING PAPER COPIES

In support of its 21st Century Strategic Plan goal of increased patent e-Government, beginning in June 2004, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office or USPTO) will begin the phase-in of its E-Patent Reference program and hence will: (1) **provide downloading capability of the U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications cited in Office actions** via the E-Patent Reference feature of the Office's Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system; and (2) **cease mailing paper copies of U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications with Office actions** (in applications and during reexamination proceedings) except for citations made during the international stage of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). In order to use the new E-Patent Reference feature applicants must: (1) obtain a digital certificate and software from the Office; (2) obtain a customer number from the Office; and (3) properly associate patent applications with the customer number. Alternatively, copies of all U.S. patents and patent application publications can be accessed without a digital certificate from the USPTO web site, from the USPTO Office of Public Records, and from commercial sources. The Office will continue the practice of supplying paper copies of foreign patent documents and non-patent literature with Office actions. Paper copies of cited references will continue to be provided by the USPTO for international applications during the international stage.

Schedule

June 2004	TCs 1600, 1700, 2800 and 2900
July 2004	TCs 3600 and 3700
August 2004	TCs 2100 and 2600

All U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications are available on the USPTO web site. However, a simple system for downloading the cited U.S. patents and patent application publications has been established for applicants, called the E-Patent Reference system. As E-Patent Reference and Private PAIR require participating applicants to have a customer number, retrieval software and a digital certificate, all applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Patent Electronic Business Center to acquire these items. To be ready to use this system by June 1, 2004, contact the Patent EBC as soon as possible by phone at 866-217-9197 (toll-free), 703-305-3028 or 703-308-6845 or electronically via the Internet at ebc@uspto.gov.

Other Options

The E-Patent Reference function requires the applicant to use the secure Private PAIR system, which establishes confidential communications with the applicant. Applicants using this facility must receive a digital certificate, as described above. Other options for obtaining patents which do not require the digital certificate include the USPTO's free Patents on the Web program (<http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html>). The USPTO's Office of Public Records also supplies copies of patents for a fee (<http://ebiz1.uspto.gov/oems25p/index.html>). Commercial sources also provide U.S. patents and patent application publications.

For complete instructions see the Official Gazette Notice, USPTO TO PROVIDE ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO CITED U.S. PATENT REFERENCES WITH OFFICE ACTIONS AND CEASE SUPPLYING PAPER COPIES, on the USPTO web site.



NOTICE OF OFFICE PLAN TO CEASE SUPPLYING COPIES OF CITED U.S. PATENT REFERENCES WITH OFFICE ACTIONS, AND PILOT TO EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVE OF PROVIDING ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO SUCH U.S. PATENT REFERENCES

Summary

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office or USPTO) plans in the near future to: (1) cease mailing copies of U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications (US patent references) with Office actions except for citations made during the international stage of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty and those made during reexamination proceedings; and (2) provide electronic access to, with convenient downloading capability of, the US patent references cited in an Office action via the Office's private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system which has a new feature called "E-Patent Reference." Before ceasing to provide copies of U.S. patent references with Office actions, the Office shall test the feasibility of the E-Patent Reference feature by conducting a two-month pilot project starting with Office actions mailed after December 1, 2003. The Office shall evaluate the pilot project and publish the results in a notice which will be posted on the Office's web site (www.USPTO.gov) and in the Patent Official Gazette (O.G.). In order to use the new E-Patent Reference feature during the pilot period, or when the Office ceases to send copies of U.S. patent references with Office actions, the applicant must: (1) obtain a digital certificate from the Office; (2) obtain a customer number from the Office, and (3) properly associate applications with the customer number. The pilot project does not involve or affect the current Office practice of supplying paper copies of foreign patent documents and non-patent literature with Office actions. Paper copies of references will continue to be provided by the USPTO for searches and written opinions prepared by the USPTO for international applications during the international stage and for reexamination proceedings.

Description of Pilot Project to Provide Electronic Access to Cited U.S. Patent References

On December 1, 2003, the Office will make available a new feature, E-Patent Reference, in the Office's private PAIR system, to allow more convenient downloading of U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications. The new feature will allow an authorized user of private PAIR to download some or all of the U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications cited by an examiner on form PTO-892 in Office actions, as well as U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications submitted by applicants on form PTO/SB08 (1449) as part of an IDS. The retrieval of some or all of the documents may be performed in one downloading step with the documents encoded as Adobe Portable Document format (.pdf) files, which is an improvement over the current page-by-page retrieval capability from other USPTO systems.

Steps to Use the New E-Patent Reference Feature During the Pilot Project and Thereafter

Access to private PAIR is required to utilize E-Patent Reference. If you don't already have access to private PAIR, the Office urges practitioners, and applicants not represented by a practitioner, to take advantage of the transition period to obtain a no-cost USPTO Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) digital certificate, obtain a USPTO customer number, associate all of their pending and new application filings with their customer number, install no-cost software (supplied by the Office) required to access private PAIR and E-Patent Reference feature, and make appropriate arrangements for Internet access. The full instructions for obtaining a PKI digital certificate are available at the Office's Electronic Business Center (EBC) web page at: <http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/downloads.html>. Note that a notarized signature will be required to obtain a digital certificate.

To get a Customer Number, download and complete the Customer Number Request form, PTO-SB125, at: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/forms/sb0125.pdf>. The completed form can then be transmitted by facsimile to the Electronic Business Center at (703) 308-2840, or mailed to the address on the form. If you are a registered attorney or patent agent, then your registration number must be associated with your customer number. This is accomplished by adding your registration number to the Customer Number Request form. A description of associating a customer number with an application is described at the EBC web page at: http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/registration_pair.html.

The E-Patent Reference feature will be accessed using a new button on the private PAIR screen. Ordinarily all of the cited U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references will be available over the Internet using the Office's new E-Patent Reference feature. The size of the references to be downloaded will be displayed by E-Patent Reference so the download time can be estimated. Applicants and registered practitioners can select to download all of the references or any combination of cited references. Selected references will be downloaded as complete documents as Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) files. For a limited period of time, the USPTO will include a copy of this notice with Office actions to encourage applicants to use this new feature and, if needed, to take the steps outlined above in order to be able to utilize this new feature during the pilot and thereafter.

During the two-month pilot, the Office will evaluate the stability and capacity of the E-Patent Reference feature to reliably provide electronic access to cited U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references. While copies of U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references cited by examiners will continue to be mailed with Office actions during the pilot project, applicants are encouraged to use the private PAIR and the E-Patent Reference feature to electronically access and download cited U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references so the Office will be able to objectively evaluate its performance. The public is encouraged to submit comments to the Office on the usability and performance of the E-Patent Reference feature during the pilot. Further, during the pilot period registered practitioners, and applicants not represented by a practitioner, are encouraged to experiment with the feature, develop a proficiency in using the feature, and establish new internal processes for using the new access to the cited U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications to prepare for the anticipated cessation of the current Office practice of supplying copies of such cited

references. The Office plans to continue to provide access to the E-Patent Reference feature during its evaluation of the pilot.

Comments

Comments concerning the E-Patent Reference feature should be in writing and directed to the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at the USPTO by electronic mail at eReference@uspto.gov or by facsimile to (703) 308-2840. Comments will be posted and made available for public inspection. To ensure that comments are considered in the evaluation of the pilot project, comments should be submitted in writing by January 15, 2004.

Comments with respect to specific applications should be sent to the Technology Centers' customer service centers. Comments concerning digital certificates, customer numbers, and associating customer numbers with applications should be sent to the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at the USPTO by facsimile at (703) 308-2840 or by e-mail at EBC@uspto.gov.

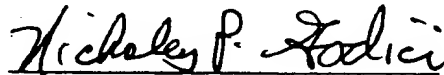
Implementation after Pilot

After the pilot, its evaluation, and publication of a subsequent notice as indicated above, the Office expects to implement its plan to cease mailing paper copies of U.S. patent references cited during examination of non provisional applications on or after February 2, 2004; although copies of cited foreign patent documents, as well as non-patent literature, will still be mailed to the applicant until such time as substantially all applications have been scanned into IFW.

For Further Information Contact

Technical information on the operation of the IFW system can be found on the USPTO website at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/ifw/index.html>. Comments concerning the E-Patent Reference feature and questions concerning the operation of the PAIR system should be directed to the EBC at the USPTO at (866) 217-9197. The EBC may also be contacted by facsimile at (703) 308-2840 or by e-mail at EBC@uspto.gov.

Date. 12/1/03



Nicholas P. Godici
Commissioner for Patents